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WHERE ARE MISSOURI ENGLISH PROGRAMS.

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MISSOURI ASSN. OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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THE EXTENT TO WHICH MISSOURI LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAMS INCORPORATE THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH (NCTE) GUIDELINES, HOW MISSOURI COMPARES WITH OTHER STATES IN REGARD TO PRESENT CONCEPTS OF LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAMS, AND HOW THE LANGUAGE ARTS ARE APPROACHED AND TAUGHT IN MISSOURI WERE THE CONCERNS OF THIS STUDY. SELECTED MISSOURI SCHOOLS REPRESENTED VARIOUS GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS AND SIZES OF SCHOOL SYSTEMS. THE MISSOURI STATE CURRICULUM GUIDE AND GUIDES FROM SEVEN MISSOURI SCHOOLS AND SEVEN OUT-OF-STATE SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED BY NCTE AS HAVING OUTSTANDING PROGRAMS WERE COMPARED. ALTHOUGH MOST OF THESE GUIDES LACKED A FORMAL PRESENTATION OF PROGRAM GOALS, SEVERAL MISSOURI GUIDES DID INCORPORATE THE GENERAL NCTE GOALS FOR LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAMS. THE CONTENT OF ALL GUIDES EXAMINED WAS SIMILAR IN THAT (1) ONE PARTICULAR LITERATURE ANTHOLOGY WAS WIDELY UTILIZED, (2) MOST PROGRAMS DID NOT FULLY INCORPORATE THE INDUCTIVE APPROACH TO LANGUAGE STUDY, AND (3) ALL BUT ONE PROGRAM USED A DESCRIPTIVE APPROACH TO GRAMMAR STUDY. EVALUATION OF MISSOURI LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAMS INDICATED AN ABSENCE OF EMPHASIS UPON INDIVIDUAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY READING, AND, APPARENTLY, A DISREGARD OF NCTE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING STUDENT READINESS AS A CRITERION FOR THE SELECTION OF CERTAIN LITERARY WORKS. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "MISSOURI ENGLISH BULLETIN," VOL. 24, NO. 1, JANUARY 1967. (RD)

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MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
JANUARY 1967

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WHERE ARE MISSOURI ENGLISH PROGRAMS?

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How do Missouri language arts program correspond to the desires of the National Council of Teachers of English? How does the state of Missouri rank in comparison with other states with regard to the present concepts of language arts programs? Just how are the language arts approached and taught in the state of Missouri? These questions are of paramount importance to those of us who are a part of the nationwide effort to present this vast area of human knowledge to the students who comprise the world's largest and most advanced educational system in the world today.

In a thesis presented to the faculty of Northeast Missouri State Teacher's College, this writer dealt with the aforementioned questions and here present the results of that particular study.

In preparation for the thesis, it was necessary to conduct a practical survey of secondary schools within the state of Missouri to ascertain the approximate percentage of schools that possessed programs in the language arts. These programs were compared and evaluated with regard to the guidelines set forth for the teaching of the language arts by National Council of Teachers of English and individuals considered by the NCTE to be experts in the field of teaching English.

The schools chosen for the survey were chosen on the basis of

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the number of teachers employed by the system, and for the geographical location of the system. Since all the schools of the state of Missouri could not be contacted because of the limitations of the study, it was felt that this method of determining which schools to contact was the best.

The schools were divided into five groups on the basis of teacher employment:

Group I	1-10 teachers
Group II	11-25 teachers
Group III	26-40 teachers
Group IV	41-65 teachers
Group V	66- teachers

It is interesting to note that Group II comprises an approximate total of 43 percent of the schools in the state of Missouri.

Of the 112 systems contacted in the survey, 52 answered. This represents a response of 46 per cent which serves as a credible basis for the results of the study. Out of the 52 schools which answered the survey letter, seven answered positively and returned a copy of their language arts program for evaluation. This means that of the 112 systems contacted 13 per cent yielded programs. Included into the study at that point was the language arts guide published by the state of Missouri.

In order to ascertain the position in which Missouri language arts programs now find themselves in relation to other states, a selected survey of programs which are recognized by the NCTE as outstanding programs was conducted.

The programs selected for the study were obtained from the following systems:

1. Detroit, Michigan
2. Portland, Oregon
3. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
4. Annapolis, Maryland
5. Houston, Texas
6. Greenwich, Connecticut
7. Baltimore, Maryland

The programs which dealt with Language, Literature, and Composition were examined, compared, and evaluated under two specific areas, namely, goals and content.

MISSOURI GUIDES COMPARED WITH THE STATEMENTS OF THE LEADERS OF THE PROFESSION

GOALS:

The goals presented by the National Council of Teachers of English should guide the various programs that are outlined by school districts. Following NCTE curriculum recommendations seems appropriate from the standpoint that the profession should be aligned in one direction, rather than having many arms reaching in several directions. Since the profession has organized the NCTE, the goals of the organization should be the goals of the profession.

Information from the available Missouri guides seemed to point out that several did incorporate the goals of the NCTE. The most noticeable in this respect was the Springfield, Missouri, guide. Also, the examination showed that individuals involved in planning the Columbia, St. Louis, and Webster Groves guides were familiar with the guidelines of the NCTE. The state guide also relied heavily upon the recommendation of the NCTE.

The Springfield guide also based much of its program upon statements from various leaders of the profession. Such leaders as A. Steryl Artley, J. N. Hook, Edward W. Dolch, and Dwight Burton have been relied upon by the Springfield school system in the planning of its guide. Page 101 of the Springfield guide contains a selected bibliography of professional materials to which the teachers of the system may refer.

The other school systems that contributed guides to this study were noticeably lacking in the presentation of goals for their programs. The most conspicuous among these belonged to one of Missouri's largest systems.

CONTENT:

The leaders of the profession have listed five areas of language study:

1. Historical linguistics, or the nature and development of language.
2. Semantics
3. Vocabulary
4. Grammar
5. Usage

These areas of content are regarded by the NCTE and the leaders of the profession as being the backbone of language study.

The Missouri programs examined brought to light interesting findings. The guides from Springfield, Columbia, and St. Louis indicated that these school systems are aware of these areas of language study. However, the other guides either did not touch upon some area, or did not make a clear designation between certain of the areas, the most noticeable of which was the failure to point out a difference between grammar and usage.

For the purpose of this paper content in literature has been held to the reading material: short stories, essays, novels, dramas, poetry, etc. Approaches such as type, chronological, etc., represent the pattern that the content can assume.

Missouri guides seem to indicate a presentation of content that stems from following an anthology totally, or the use of an anthology as a basis for common class selections with a certain emphasis upon outside the classroom selections. The latter approach is the one that is most favorably linked to the recommendations of the NCTE.

Content of composition, both oral and written, as recommended by the NCTE is the progression of the sentence, the paragraph, and the whole work. One point that is made by the NCTE is that the long research paper does not have to be included in the curriculum. The NCTE stresses organization of the shorter work—up to 500 words. The Missouri guides that included composition in the program also included the longer research paper as a part of the program for the twelfth grade English classes.

COMPARISON OF MISSOURI GUIDES WITH SELECTED OUT-OF-STATE GUIDES

GOALS:

The examination of the selected out-of-state guides yielded the impression that certain of these guides were deficient in the listing of goals. The study of the Missouri guides demonstrated the same point. The conclusion to be drawn from these examinations of goals is that Missouri guides are in step with the out-of-state guides. The goals, when listed by either the Missouri guides or the out-of-state guides, did follow the recommendation of the NCTE. However, it is unfortunate that not all the guides listed goals for achievement.

CONTENT:

A comparison of the guides points out that content among the

guides is not dissimilar. Language in the Detroit, Michigan, school system consists of grammar and usage with an eleventh grade emphasis on semantics. This does not in any significant manner differ from the Springfield, Missouri, program. The Springfield program offers grammar and usage combined, as does the Detroit system. Semantics as a facet of language is studied separately in the same manner as in the Detroit system under the heading of mass communication.

The Detroit system approaches the language concepts included in the Columbia, Missouri, program through the use of similar texts. Both schools apparently rely upon Warriner's *English Grammar and Composition* and employ an assortment of supplementary texts.

The outstanding use of the inductive approach to the teaching of language, the approach recommended by the NCTE and leaders of the profession, is used by the Portland, Oregon, school system, which presents the content of its language program through the use of such texts as Paul Roberts' *English Sentences* and Laird's *Tree of Language*. Such areas as American dialects and semantics are also taught in this language program. No Missouri programs examined by the writer so fully incorporate the recommendations of the NCTE as does the Portland program.

As in certain of the Missouri programs examined, there are those programs from other states which present language—grammar—solely as a function of composition. Among these programs are those from:

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Houston, Texas
Chillicothe, Missouri
St. Louis, Missouri

One school system of Missouri apparently studies grammar for the sake of grammar. A prescriptive and sterile study of grammar was not found in any of the NCTE recommended out-of-state programs.

Content of literature in the various programs had one specific point in common. The Harcourt-Brace *Adventure* series of anthologies is apparently used throughout the United States with some regularity according to the sources available to the writer.

A look at the goals of the literature program of the Detroit system reveals that the content to be studied within that system

is threefold: literary types, narrative techniques, and literary terms and devices. The literary types study of content is prevalent throughout most of the guides examined. The St. Louis guide also contains references to the study of narrative techniques, and literary terms and devices. The Columbia, Missouri, guide focuses on these same emphases.

Individual reading is stressed in certain of the guides as an integral part of the literature content. Detroit, Portland, Columbia, and Springfield emphasize this facet of the literature program.

Content in composition falls into two patterns both in Missouri and out of Missouri according to the guides studied that dealt with this area. The Springfield, Missouri, guide describes the composition program as encompassing writing, thinking, listening, and speaking. The Baltimore City Public Schools guide is titled *Writing*, and does not touch speaking.

The Baltimore guide lists letter-writing, note-taking, outlining, summarizing, book reporting, and written examinations as comprising the content of the program. The St. Louis system and the Webster Groves system use the same manner of describing content.

EVALUATION OF MISSOURI LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAMS

As has already been pointed out, the survey which the writer conducted secured seven program guides from a possible 112. Included afterward was the state guide. The survey seems to indicate that the language arts programs within the state are without unity of state-wide organization with regard to the recommendations of either the state guide or the NCTE.

Since the NCTE and the leaders of the profession have spent their time and effort in research and the setting up of guidelines to be used in the schools of the United States, it seems only logical that the guidelines of the profession could be adhered to by the people involved in the teaching of the Language Arts.

Only half of the guides used in the Missouri study demonstrated any knowledge of the professional materials available at this time.[1] The results of the study of the guides leave the conclusion that the teachers of the state could enhance their programs by be-

1. Materials such as: NCTE Publications and programs by those considered by the NCTE as being authorities, such as Pooley, Hook, Sauer, and Burton.

coming familiar with and by using the professional materials published for their benefit.

At no time did the writer find a guide that offered a study of the five areas of language content that are described by the NCTE. These areas, the nature and development of language, vocabulary, semantics, grammar, and usage are described as language content. Yet, in the guides examined in the study, these various areas were sometimes thrown together with certain skills, such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, or else were not included at all. The study indicated in some cases that grammar and usage are considered one area. When grammar and usage were found together in one area, the study indicated a prescriptive approach to language, which is not in line with the recommendations of the NCTE, which insists upon an inducive approach to the teaching of language.

The nature of language or historical linguistics, if the area is offered, is often approached through the Harcourt-Brace *Adventures* anthologies. An examination of these anthologies reveals a minimal amount of content in the area. The nature of language is important to the understanding of the other areas of language study. The study of grammar is of little value without the knowledge of the reasons for the present structure of the English language. Without a study of historical linguistics, other areas of language can become only unrelated studies within themselves and possess little value for the students either culturally or practically.

In summation the writer lists two recommendations for the teaching of language:

1. The five areas of language study should be defined and studied.
2. Content should be approached through the inductive method.

The guides examined generally indicated three limitations with regard to the teaching of literature. The first of these limitations is individual reading. Springfield, St. Louis, Webster Groves, and Columbia presented bibliographies of materials available to students. Other guides did not stress individual reading. The NCTE strongly emphasizes individual reading as an aspect of the literature program. The schools of Missouri should take note of the individual reading emphasis and strengthen the programs in this respect.

Another area that should be of concern to the teachers of litera-

ture is that of supplementary reading. The guides examined by the writer show that many schools apparently rely only upon the anthology for the literature content of the program. Again Springfield, St. Louis, Webster Groves, and Columbia supplied lists of unit-related materials that could be used to supplement the anthology. The absence of supplementary materials seems to indicate that other school systems are neglecting the important aspect of supplementary reading.

The last point to be brought into focus is that of the choice of selections that are required in the course content. The examination of the guides indicated that certain selections apparently are not chosen with regard to student readiness, if the basic reading lists and statements that have been quoted in the guidelines chapter are used as a basis.

There are two basic approaches to determining what constitutes content in composition. The majority of materials published by the NCTE indicates that content in composition should entail writing and speaking based upon ordered thinking. The second conception of content in composition focuses on skills such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Since the majority of current materials stress ordered thinking as the most important basis of content in composition, the writer feels that programs should be built upon this premise and that the skills involved in writing should be considered only as writing skills, and not the content of courses in composition.

"OPERATION HONOREE" CONTINUED

English departments of every college in the state of Missouri are again being asked to select an outstanding English major, who will be honored at the spring meeting of M.A.T.E. This program was very successful last year in its initial appearance under the direction of the late Dr. Robert J. Greef. The director this year is Dr. Frank W. Grube, Northwest Missouri State College, Maryville, Missouri, 64468, to whom inquiries may be directed.

SPRING MEETING 1967

Please reserve Saturday, April 29, 1967, for the M.A.T.E. Spring Meeting to be held at Hickman High School in Columbia, Missouri.